

We claim:

1/ An isolated microbial cell comprising an Environmentally Limited Viability System, wherein the cell is viable in a permissive environment and non-viable in a non-permissive environment, the system comprising

(a) an essential gene, wherein expression of the gene in the cell is essential to the viability of the cell, the essential gene is expressed when the cell is in the permissive environment and is not expressed when the cell is in the non-permissive environment; and

(b) a lethal gene, wherein expression of the gene is lethal to the cell and the lethal gene is expressed when the cell is in the non-permissive environment but not when the cell is in the permissive environment.

2. The cell of claim 1 wherein the permissive environment comprises a temperature of about 37°C and the non-permissive environment comprises a temperature of less than about 30°C.

3. The cell of claim 1 wherein the permissive environment is inside a warm-blooded animal and the non-permissive environment is outside a warm-blooded animal.

4. The cell of claim 1 wherein the essential gene, the lethal gene, or both, is carried on an extrachromosomal vector.

5. The cell of claim 4 wherein the lethal gene is carried on an extrachromosomal vector and expression of the lethal gene is regulated by an expression product of a regulatory gene on a chromosome of the cell.

6. The cell of claim 5 wherein the expression product of the regulatory gene inhibits expression of the lethal gene and is expressed or active only in the permissive environment.

7. The cell of claim 5 wherein the expression product of the regulatory gene induces expression of the lethal gene and is expressed or active only in the non-permissive environment.

8. The cell of claim 4 wherein the vector has two lethal genes.
9. The cell of claim 8 wherein the vector comprises pMEG-104.
10. The cell of claim 1 wherein the cell is a gram-negative bacterium.
11. The cell of claim 10 wherein the gram-negative bacterium is an enteric bacterium.
12. The cell of claim 11 wherein the genus of the enteric bacterium is selected from the group consisting of *Escherichia* and *Salmonella*.
13. The cell of claim 1 wherein expression of the essential gene is regulated by an expression product of a regulatory gene.
14. The cell of claim 13 wherein the expression product of the regulatory gene inhibits expression of the essential gene and is expressed or active only in the non-permissive environment.
15. The cell of claim 13 wherein the expression product of the regulatory gene induces expression of the essential gene and is expressed or active only in the permissive environment.
16. The cell of claim 4 wherein the system further comprises a replication gene carried on a chromosome of the cell, the expression of which is required for replication of the vector, wherein the replication gene is expressed in the permissive environment and is not expressed in the non-permissive environment.
17. The cell of claim 16 wherein expression of the replication gene is regulated by an expression product of a regulatory gene.
18. The cell of claim 17 wherein the expression product of the regulatory gene inhibits expression of the replication gene and is expressed or active only in the non-permissive environment.
19. The cell of claim 17 wherein the expression product of the regulatory gene induces expression of the replication gene and is expressed or active only in the permissive environment.

20. The cell of claim 1 further comprising an expression gene wherein the expression gene encodes a desired expression product.

21. The cell of claim 20 wherein the desired expression product is an antigen.

22. The cell of claim 21 wherein the antigen is selected from the group consisting of bacterial antigens, viral antigens, plant antigens, fungal antigens, insect antigens, and non-insect animal antigens.

23. The cell of claim 1 for use as a vaccine, wherein the cell is viable when in the an animal and non-viable when outside of the animal, the essential gene is expressed when the cell is in the animal and is not expressed when the cell is outside of the animal, and the lethal gene is expressed when the cell is outside of the animal and is not expressed when the cell is in the animal, wherein the permissive environment comprises a temperature of about 37°C and the non-permissive environment comprises a temperature of less than about 30°C.

24. The cell of claim 23 further comprising an expression gene wherein the expression gene encodes a desired expression product.

25. The cell of claim 24 wherein the desired expression product is an antigen.

26. The cell of claim 25 wherein the antigen is selected from the group consisting of bacterial antigens, viral antigens, plant antigens, fungal antigens, insect antigens, and non-insect animal antigens.

27. A method of making a cell strain with environmentally limited viability comprising stably introducing into a cell

(a) an essential gene, wherein expression of the gene in the cell is essential to the viability of the cell, the essential gene is expressed when the cell is in the permissive environment and is not expressed when the cell is in the non-permissive environment;

(b) a lethal gene, wherein expression of the gene is lethal to the cell and the lethal gene is expressed when the cell is in the non-

permissive environment but not when the cell is in the permissive environment,

wherein the cell strain is viable in a permissive environment and non-viable in a non-permissive environment.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein the permissive environment comprises a temperature of about 37°C and the non-permissive environment comprises a temperature of less than about 30°C.

29. The method of claim 27 wherein the permissive environment is inside a warm-blooded animal and the non-permissive environment is outside a warm-blooded animal.

30. A method of inducing immunoprotection in a warm-blooded animal comprising

administering to the animal a vaccine comprising a microbial cell comprising an Environmentally Limited Viability System, wherein the cell is viable when in the animal and non-viable when outside of the animal, the system comprising at least one of the following nucleic acid sequences

(a) an essential gene, wherein expression of the gene in the cell is essential to the viability of the cell, the essential gene is expressed when the cell is in the animal and is not expressed when the cell is outside of the animal; and

(b) a lethal gene, wherein expression of the gene is lethal to the cell and the lethal gene is expressed when the cell is outside of the animal but not when the cell is in the animal.

31. The method of claim 30 wherein the system further comprising an expression gene wherein the expression gene encodes an antigen.

32. The method of claim 31 wherein the antigen is selected from the group consisting of bacterial antigens, viral antigens, plant antigens, fungal antigens, insect antigens, and non-insect animal antigens.

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33. The method of claim 30 wherein the cell is administered to mucosal surfaces of the animal.

34. The method of claim 33 wherein the mucosal surfaces are in the gastrointestinal tract.

35. The method of claim 30 wherein the essential gene, the lethal gene, or both, is carried on an extrachromosomal vector, and wherein the system further comprises a replication gene carried on a chromosome of the cell, the expression of which is required for replication of the vector, wherein the replication gene is expressed when the cell is in the animal and is not expressed when the cell is outside of the animal.

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